

ABOUT FIREPLACES.

ADORNED WITH CARVED CASINGS AND DECORATIVE OVERMANTELS.

Hard Wood Mantels and Tiled Fronts When Money is Plentiful—Homemade Contrivances Where Economy Rules—How to Make an Ornamental Overmantel.

Fireplaces exercise the brains of the house mistress all the year round. In summer one is puzzled to know how to adorn them in some way that shall be novel as well as pretty, and in winter one thinks of hangings that will take off the chilly effect of the grayish white marble to which we seem doomed in our drawing rooms. For those who have plenty of money the adornment of the fireplace is very simple, for they have only to get a casing of carved wood, which solves the whole problem. But there are many, on the other hand, who have to study economy in ornamenting their homes. For this class The Housewife describes and illustrates a method of decorating the fireplace and contriving an overmantel all in one. The ex-



A MODERN FIREPLACE.

pense is small, especially to those who are skillful with their needle, in which case the brocade may be substituted for plain satin embroidered by hand. The idea is particularly adapted to low rooms.

In the first place, a mantel board is fixed onto the shelf, and this is of a novel shape, the center being the same size as the shelf beneath, but the sides jutting out in semicircular fashion. This is plainly covered with a piece of brocade, and, for example, we will imagine it to be of buttercup yellow, with a lace design upon it in white. In the middle it hangs down to a depth of four inches and is edged with ball fringe to match.

It wants painting, and for such a fireplace as described ivory white enamel, with a liberal touching up of gold, would be appropriate. A very thin brass rod must be fixed just under the shelf, and from this hang a curtain of white cloth, with a conventional border embroidered on it in yellow, brown and gold thread.

The ornaments for this mantelpiece may be pieces of bronze and copper ware, and if any china were wanted some other foreign glass jars or vases will be appropriate.

Where less expensive material is required, washing lines can be bought in various colors, and these make excellent



MANTEL AND CASING OF CARVED WOOD.

hangings. They may be arranged in one piece, as just described, and in this case some pretty border may be worked along them—a trail of brown brambles on the linen, for instance. But in many rooms a plain slip to go upon the shelf, with a fall in front of 12 inches, is all that is wanted, and here any design might be worked that one's fancy dictated. For a gentleman's room a group of black lilies might chase each other over a piece of dull red linen. For the dainty bachelorette of a young lady there could be an arrangement of roses and butterflies on a pale blue linen.

PLAYING IN PUBLIC.

Performance at Concerts—Selection of Pieces—Advice to Debutants.

There comes a time to nearly every student of the pianoforte when playing is at all above the average when he is asked to perform in public.

It may be at a concert on behalf of some charitable institution or for the benefit of some member of the musical profession, but whatever the object let not the earnest student rashly refuse to avail himself of so valuable a means of musical advancement as such an opportunity affords, advises a writer in Le Etude, who adds: Even if the request be for him to act merely as accompanist, and worth performing well. Copies of the songs to be sung should be procured beforehand, and the accompaniments diligently studied.

It may be, however, that the young pianist will be asked to contribute one or two pianoforte solos, and here much discrimination and judgment will be required. The style and culture of the audience must be taken into account rather than the special proclivities of the performer. To play a long sonata or a selection of fugues at a popular entertainment would be to offer a premium to dissatisfaction and failure.

Until a pianist has quite gained the good opinion of the public it is highly desirable that his pieces should be short and "taking." A very good plan is to play two short pieces of contrasted style at one sitting—say, for example, the following: Pianoforte solo—(a) nocturne in F minor, Chopin; (b) valse in A flat, Moszkowski.

A slight pause should be made between the two pieces, and if the applause is long continued the performer should rise and bow before proceeding with the second piece. To ignore applause is the surest method of causing its diminution on subsequent occasions; therefore the player should always acknowledge it with some appearance of gratification.

After the performance of the second piece the pianist should at once gracefully retire, returning to bow if the applause is considerable. Should an encore be inevitable it is a good plan to select something still shorter and brighter than the piece previously played. This will be sure to please the audience, and such a plan may be of material use in building up the reputation of the performer.

The debutant must not be disconcerted should some of his audience commence to talk while he is playing. Neither must he fall into the mistake of attempting to drown the conversation by loud playing. Such an endeavor to assert one's self is worse than useless, for the louder the playing the louder will be the talking. As a rule, the very opposite method will be found to prove more effectual in securing silence. Nearly every performer has at times to go through the very painful ordeal of affording a mere accompaniment to conversation. It may be of some comfort to the novice to remember that not even a Beethoven or a Mendelssohn was exempt from the trial.

A Drop or Two of Oil.

Many housekeepers know how hard door latches often work and sometimes even "with impetuous recoil and jarring sound." A drop or two of sweet oil on the tip of the forefinger touched to the face of the latch will immediately and effectually cure it. It is a good practice to pass around once a week to all the doors and oil the latches. One drop will completely oil half a dozen doors. Small machines, such as sewing machines indoors and grass seed covers out of doors, are greatly benefited by a single touch of oil on the fast running parts.

The Bamboo Lounge.

A bamboo lounge in winter gives one cold chills, but it can be transformed into a thing of beauty with small expense. Get golden brown or dark red corduroy and make thick tufted cushions for the seat and back. They can be made in sections and tied to the lounge; then have three or four big downy pillows covered with india silk to scatter over it.

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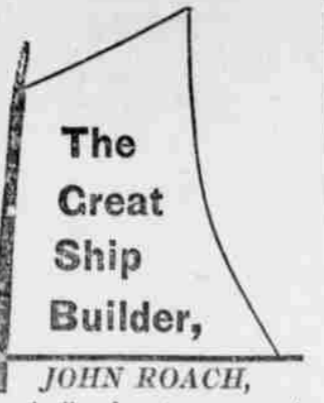
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